

Check out the February 2021 Newsletter!

See the online version at vvschool.ca/news-events/newsletter.



Learning Without Limits

Happy February! We hope you had a great first month of 2021. For our high schoolers, congratulations on making it through another semester and best wishes for the semester to come! For all of you, we've included a list of important dates – for both second semester and the summer semester.

Friday, February 12 is Chinese New Year – soon we will be welcoming in the Year of the Ox. In the Chinese tradition, the ox is synonymous with honesty, earnestness, and hard work. Usually hiding its talents and never seeking to be the centre of attention, the ox nonetheless perseveres through logical thinking and steady determination.

We can all use some ox-like determination around now. For many in our part of the world, this is the toughest time of the year at the best of times, and amid a global pandemic it is all the more trying. That said, the days are slowly but surely getting longer and spring is around the corner. We'll all get through this together!

We always welcome your comments and feedback regarding this newsletter, or anything else. If you have any questions or concerns, please phone us toll-free at 1-855-974-5333 or talk with your teacher. If you have any VVS-related stories you'd like to share, here or on our website or social media platforms, please contact [Ben Freeland](#), our communications and marketing specialist.

Have a wonderful month!

Sincerely,



Mike Loitz,
Principal



Treena Bradbury,
Associate Principal



Frank McCallum,
Associate Principal

New This Month

Second Semester Begins!

Second semester for high school students begins Monday, February 1, 2021. Course selection remains open until Friday, April 9. As always, students are expected to follow course timelines and submit assignments on a regular basis.



Second Semester Dates at a Glance

February 1 – Second semester begins

April 9 – Deadline to register or withdraw from any second semester courses

June 15 – All second semester assignments/quizzes due (all grades)

June 22 – All second semester exams completed (all grades)

Pink Shirt Day

Wednesday, February 24 is [Pink Shirt Day](#). For those unfamiliar with it, Pink Shirt Day began in 2007 when a Nova Scotia student was bullied for wearing a pink shirt to school. It has since been embraced across Canada and internationally as a day for taking a stand against bullying.



We encourage everyone to wear a pink top on the 24th, share it on social media, and otherwise be an anti-bullying advocate in your community.

VVS Office Closed

All VVS support staff will be working home until further notice. The Calgary campus will remain open for exams and other business, but strictly by appointment. Those wishing to visit are requested to book an appointment in advance and to wear a mask.

Our phone line (1-855-974-5333 x5317) is being monitored but not answered in person. All voicemails are being redirected to the VV Support email inbox and are being responded to in the order in which they are received. Our support staff may respond to messages either by phone or email. All other phone numbers and extensions will remain the same unless otherwise noted.

RE/MAX Quest for Excellence 2021 Bursary Program Accepting Applications

RE/MAX of Western Canada is once again offering \$1,000 bursaries to 16 grade 12 students across western Canada through its Quest for Excellence bursary program. The contest is open to all grade 12 students in western Canada attending high school between September 2020 and June 2021, and who have not yet participated in graduation commencement ceremonies.



The program is welcoming submissions until Monday, March 15, 2021. Winners will be notified in April 2021, with a formal presentation at the students' commencement ceremonies. Read more [here](#) about how to apply.

WISEST Summer Research Program – Applications Open

Registration opens Monday, February 1 for the 2021 WISEST (Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science, and Technology) [Summer Research Program \(SRP\)](#), which runs from July 5 to August 13, 2021 for female students finishing grade 11 in 2021 with an interest in exploring careers in the STEM fields.



The deadline for applications is Wednesday, April 7. Applications are open to students from across Alberta, as well as to out-of-province students who meet the equivalent eligibility requirements. Read more about it [here](#).

Explore a Career as an Electrician

CAREERS: The Next Generation is holding the last of its January-February Virtual Showcases on Tuesday, February 9. This session will introduce students to the ins and outs of working as an electrician and the certification involved, while also providing valuable information on trades internship opportunities.



Visit [this page](#) for more information and to register. More events will be coming in subsequent months, including the ongoing Young Women in Trades and Technology (YWITT) series. You can stay tuned on the [CAREERS TNG website](#) or on our social media pages.

Accessing the Student Information System (SIS)

Parents and guardians who have not yet logged into the VVS Student Information System (SIS) should do so as soon as possible, as this is the best way to monitor your child's progress, review correspondence, keep track of course timelines, and stay up to date with your child's activities and submissions. You should have received an email providing you with login information for your account.



To get started, visit the [school website](#) and select the Course Login quick link button (below the rotational spotlight window) to be directed to the SIS login page. If you have forgotten your username and/or password, you can retrieve them by submitting your email address. You can also contact us at wsupport@pembinahills.ca or by phone at 1-855-974-5333 x5317 if you have any trouble.

Summer School Registration Starts March 1

Summer may feel like a century away, but with March just around the corner, it is nearly time for summer school registration to open. Summer school registration is open from March 1 to July 10 for 1 and 3-credit courses and from March 1 to June 15 for 5-credit courses. Students may enrol in a

maximum of ten credits. Specific course format and required materials can be found on our [course catalogue](#).

All school-aged high school students who are residents of Alberta are eligible to register for summer school. Grade 9 students, who are in good standing, may register for Grade 10 course that do not have prerequisite. Read more about the summer school admission process, eligibility, and requirements on the [VVS website](#).

Summer Semester Dates at a Glance

March 1 – Summer semester begins

June 15 – Deadline to register for 5-credit summer semester courses

July 2 – Deadline to withdraw from 5-credit summer semester courses

July 10 – Deadline to register for or withdraw from 1 or 3-credit summer semester courses

July 15 – Marks for summer semester courses start being reported

July 30 – All summer semester assignments/quizzes due

August 6 – All summer semester exams completed

Adult Learning at Vista Virtual School

Vista Virtual School welcomes applications from adult upgrading student—defined as those aged 20 or up as of September 1, 2020—throughout the year. For more information on our adult program, please visit [our website](#) or email us at vsadults@pembinahills.ca.

Student ID Cards Available

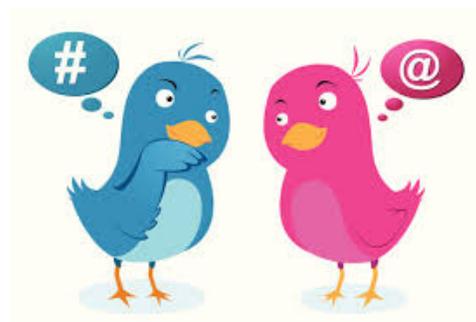
Are you or your child interested in having a Vista Virtual School ID card? Email us at vsupport@pembinahills.ca with your (child's) name and Alberta Student Number together with an appropriate headshot, and we will get this sent off to you.

School Council and Parent Input

Although we do not have a formal School Council, we welcome parents, guardians, and students to provide input on the operations of the school. Your suggestions can be directed to [Mike Loitz](#), Principal.

Engage with us on social media

In addition to this newsletter and our regular website news postings, Vista Virtual School is also active on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). We encourage you to follow us for updates on everything from post-secondary orientations to work experience opportunities to news articles and online resources of interest to students and parents, as well as to just say hello and engage with us.



Also, should you come across any interesting virtual learning resources you think we should share via our social media networks, we would love to hear from you. We too are always learning, and we would love to share what you find out there.

Monthly Events Calendar

Check out our [monthly events](#) on our website. We update this calendar as events are added.

Important Dates in February

February – [Black History Month](#)

February 1 – Second semester begins

February 11 – [International Day of Women and Girls in Science](#)

February 12 – [Chinese New Year](#)

February 14 – Valentine's Day

February 15 – [Family Day \(campus closed\)](#)

February 20 – [World Day of Social Justice](#)

February 24 – [Pink Shirt Day](#)

Learn About Black History Online This Month

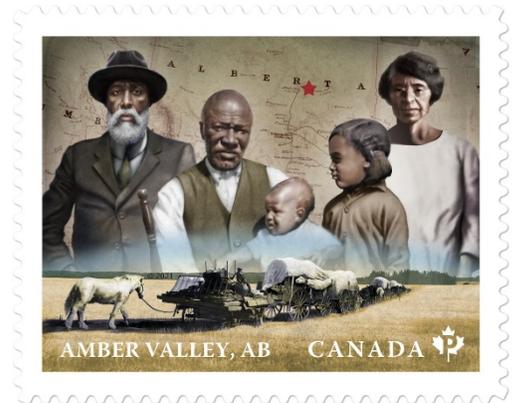
February is Black History Month. First officially recognized by the Alberta government in 2017, it is a time to acknowledge the complex and still under-recognized role of Black people in Alberta's (and Canada's) history.

As of 2016, there were 129,000 Black people in Alberta, a population that continues to grow. Meanwhile, the prairie provinces are home to Canada's fastest growing Black population, according to Statistics Canada. Still, Afro-Canadian history continues to receive far less attention than it should, and Black Albertan history even less so. While names like Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks are familiar to nearly everyone, names like [Lulu Anderson](#) and [Violet King](#) remain largely unknown.

Alberta's Black history dates back at least to the dawn of the 20th century, when approximately [1,000 African American migrants](#) from Oklahoma fleeing Jim Crow repression relocated to the province in response to advertising campaigns initiated by the Canadian Immigration Department. Many of these migrants settled in rural communities like Amber Valley and Wildwood (then called Junkins), where they proved to be resourceful homesteaders despite a widespread racist backlash against them.

Alberta's next wave of Black migrants would come in the 1950s, primarily from the English-speaking nations of the Caribbean, followed by the most recent wave, primarily from Sub-Saharan Africa. Today roughly 1.4 percent of Albertans identify as Black, a rate that rises to 4.5 percent in Edmonton and close to four percent in Calgary. Nearly two thirds of this population are first-generation immigrants, with the top countries of origin being Nigeria, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Somalia, and Eritrea.

So where can one learn about the fascinating, complex, and largely unheralded history of Alberta's – and Canada's – Black communities? Under normal circumstances we would be directing you to any



number of in-person events. Fortunately, there are a good number of online resources designed to compensate for the loss of in-person learning opportunities.

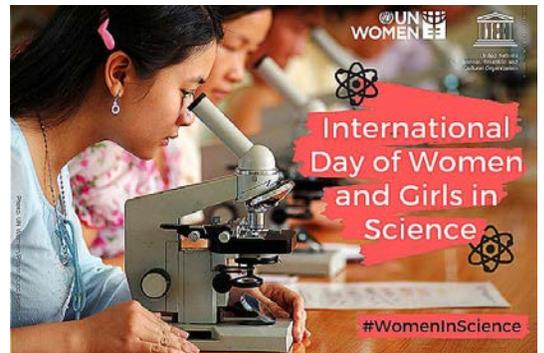
- [MacEwan University](#) is celebrating Black History Month online with a series of virtual events. This includes a Zoom history seminar entitled [Tracking Black Canada](#) being held on Wednesday, February 3, as well as numerous online discussions of race and the complicated reality of being Black in Canada and Alberta today.
- [The University of Calgary](#) is also hosting a series of online educational events.
- [St. Albert Public Library](#) is hosting a series of online Friday-night film watch parties featuring a series Black Canadian films from the National Film Board on February 5, 12, and 26.
- [The Government of Canada](#) has an extensive archive of videos and other resources related to Black History Month, including biographies of notable historical figures, major historical milestones, and links to further educational resources.

Lastly, those interested in stamp collecting will want to order some of [Canada Post's brand new commemorative stamps](#) dedicated to the Black homesteaders of Amber Valley.

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

February, February 11 is [International Day of Women and Girls in Science](#). First marked by the United Nations in 2015, IDWGS seeks to highlight the still-pronounced disparity between men and women in the STEM fields and to promote efforts to increase female participation in science and technology.

Despite considerable progress over the last century, less than 30 percent of the world's research scientists are women, and only around 30 percent of all female students select STEM-related fields in higher education. In Canada, [the statistics are no better](#) than the global average, with women making up less than a quarter of all science and technology workers and no more than 34 percent of STEM degree holders.



The good news is that there are more opportunities than ever for young women and girls with a passion for science to shine. The University of Alberta's [Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science, and Technology \(WISEST\)](#), whose upcoming Summer Research Program we mentioned earlier, has been in the glass ceiling-busting business for over 36 years, and has a wealth of resources for young female scientists. The University of Calgary has a [mentorship program](#) for women in engineering.

In addition, the Canadian government also has [extensive online resources](#) aimed at supporting young women interested in scientific careers. These include [resources for parents](#) and [teachers](#) as well as information on [science fairs and STEM competitions](#). Provincially, the Government of Alberta's [Leaders in Equality Award of Distinction \(LEAD\) Program](#) is currently seeking applications for its Persons Case Scholarship and Women in STEM Award, both aimed at female students interested in sciences.

While a lot of work remains to be done in combatting educational and professional gender disparities, there has truly never been a better time to be female and interested in science!

Contacts

Principal	Mike Loitz		
Associate Principals	Treena Bradbury	Frank McCallum	
Academic Counsellors	Dominick Gallo	Andrea Robin	Christy Filgate (Special Ed.)
Adult Academic Counsellors	vsadults@pembinahills.ca		
School Hours	8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (teachers' working hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)		
Contact Information	P: 1-855-974-5333	VVS Support x5317	
	<i>Edmonton Campus</i> x6100 300-10055 106 Street NW Edmonton, AB T7N 1P4	<i>Calgary Campus</i> x6200 341 58 Avenue SE Calgary, AB T2H 0P3	
School Email	vsupport@pembinahills.ca		
We're Online	Twitter @VistaVirtualSch	Facebook VistaVirtualSch	Website vvschool.ca
Connect with Us	Please follow us on Facebook and Twitter for updates on events and activities throughout the year. Our website is also a valuable source of information.	Do you have a story to tell (or a typo to report)? Email Ben Freeland .	The newsletter is published monthly and sent to students, parents, and guardians by email.