

# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Summary of Annual Council of School Council Meeting and Parent Night - February 21, 2018

## An Interactive Occasion

Black Gold community members were interactively engaged on important future topics at the Annual Council of School Council Meeting and Parent Night

Approximately 30 parents and staff were engaged by the Board of Trustees of Black Gold Regional Division No. 18 and Senior Executives at the Annual Council of School Council Meeting and Parent Night on February 21st, 2018 at the MacLab Centre in Leduc.

To start the evening Trustees were formally introduced to audience guests via video where they explained what ward they were elected in and what their favourite thing about Black Gold Regional Division was. In opening comments, Board Chair, Barb Martinson, stated to attendees that “all seven members of the Board believe it is a true privilege to be able to be a representative of their community and to work with [community members] in order to advocate for public education.”

Mrs Martinson, also expressed to parents that “it is important for [them] to have regular opportunities for input and to have [their] voice heard”. She stressed that each attendee’s feedback expressed during the evening would “play an important role in helping to ensure [the Board] is successful in achieving welcoming, caring, safe and healthy environments for all students and staff in all Black Gold schools”.

The overall purpose of the evening was to heavily focus on extracting the attendees own thoughts and ideas around international field trips/travel and planning for the future of Black Gold.



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The main activity of the evening had all members of the audience participate in an International Travel Cafe that used the de Bono Group's *Six Thinking Hats* – a design thinking method that is designed to help people be more focused and mindfully involved. Members of the audience were rotated through five themed stations facilitated by Black Gold Trustees in order to have a timed discussion about international travel/field trips. The station themes were: Our Travel Philosophy; Dollars & Cents; Risky Business; Educational Value; and Oh the Places You'll Go. Group members were encouraged to mentally wear and switch “symbolic thinking hats”, that had a clearly defined function and role, in order to probe the station's theme and explore the discussion from numerous perspectives.



“Some great discussion and feedback came out of the Six Thinking Hats activity including numerous perspectives and thoughts on topics such as how do we weigh the educational value of travel, what is our staff's role and responsibility when it comes to field trips, how do we ensure fundraising is adhering to charitable regulations, fair and equitable, what risks are associated with travel, and what geographical locations should students get to experience?”, stated one Trustee. All the feedback

gathered throughout this activity is intended to be used to further Board discussion around its international field trip/travel policy.

Members of the audience also participated in an online interactive poll to provide some benchmarking and future direction to the Board. Data compiled from the online poll will help provide guidance and direction to the Board in order to set future priorities and align their strategic organizational goals and objectives with the needs to community.

To conclude the evening, Superintendent of Schools, Norman Yanitski provided a brief update on new school construction and modernization advancements. The Superintendent also informed the audience that “as Black Gold's enrolment population continues to grow, updating the capital plan and ensuring safe and welcoming environments for our staff and students, by prioritizing construction and modernization, continues to be a major Division priority.” Further updates regarding the development and approval of the Division's 2018 - 2021 3 Year Capital Plan are expected at the next regular board meeting.

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Board of Trustees of Black Gold Regional Division No. 18 and Senior Executives wish to extend a sincere thank you to all the parents and staff who participated in the 2018 Annual Council of School Council Meeting and Parent Night and provided valuable insight and input throughout the evening.

**ASCA School Councils' Conference and AGM, April 20 - 22, 2018.**

Black Gold Regional Division No. 18 supports the following:

- 100% Board financial support of conference registration for 4 School Council Members
- 100% Board financial support of conference registration for 1 New School Council Member in the first year of formation

In order to be eligible schools must email names to [sandy.fownes@blackgold.ca](mailto:sandy.fownes@blackgold.ca) by Friday, March 16, 2018 and indicate if first year of formation. Selected recipients will be randomly drawn.

– 30 –

***About Black Gold Regional Division No. 18***

Black Gold Regional Division No. 18 (BGRD) is located directly south of Edmonton, extending from the New Sarepta area in the east, to the Warburg area in the west. It includes the the communities of Beaumont, Calmar, Devon, Leduc, New Sarepta, Thorsby and Warburg. With approximately 11,500 students enrolled in 32 schools, BGRD teachers and support staff are committed to “inspiring success” in all students. For more information on Black Gold Regional Division No. 18 and our schools, visit: [www.blackgold.ca](http://www.blackgold.ca).

For more information, or media inquiries, please contact:

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